homes. Many of them would perhaps buy these commodities today if 461
the purchasing power of their products would permit them to do so. The existence of their elders and forefathers was not a bit easier either; hard work and rare leisure is, as they believe, their natural inheritance, and, as long as this hard work provides their livelihood, they do not think of revolting against it.

The Hungarian peasants are extremely hospitable and live a 574 576
gregarious social life. Among the many customs connected with receiving and entertaining, the few selected below are only random examples:

Guests, after entering the courtyard, do not knock on the door but wait until they are noticed and invited to enter. The men shake hands. The guest is then offered a choice seat in the main living room, which is generally the one opposite the door. Each drink consumed during the visit must be toasted to someone's health. Upon leaving, the guest is accompanied by the host to a distance determined by the prestige and position of the visitor.

During the winter months, the women assemble in the evening 462 221
to do handwork or spinning. This is always an occasion to tell tales, jokes, to sing and to play games.

778 795 at least a dozen other local churches, e.g. Szeged-Alsóváros and Hajós, which attract the flock not only of the village but also of the neighboring regions on account of certain powers that are attributed to their saints.

[788] The pious peasants often plant crosses at the crossroads and at the boundaries of their villages; when they pass by, they sign themselves with the cross. Larger towns feature calvaries (kálvária), open air representations of Christ's sufferings which are visited by the faithful especially during Lent.

576 771 The sayings common among the peasantry also reveal their deep religiousness. Greetings, for example, of the jó napot 'good day' type are always returned in the country with adjon Isten 'may God grant you.' The greeting Dicsértessék a Jézus Krisztus - Mindörökké, amen is very common among the Catholic peasants; it is of purely ecclesiastical origin, a direct translation of Laudetur I. Ch. - In aeternum, amen. Moreover, all of the more elaborate types of greetings refer to God and are actually derived from blessings.

796 795 Processions are common among the Catholics. On major holidays, especially on Easter and Corpus Christi Day, the clergy and the faithful march through the main streets of the town, carrying square gonfalons with pictures of saints, candles and the Holy Sacrament, singing hymns and praying. Before harvest time, a procession goes out to the fields where the blessing of the crops takes place with the assistance of the whole village. Processions

10: Viski E-4, 5 (no date) 1932 EC1 Hungary EC1

584 he may visit with «serious» intentions. Whether he likes her or not, — he may marry only that girl whom his parents like! If the boy disapproves of his parents' taste he can declare that he will not marry just yet, thereby merely expressing the hope that perhaps in the meantime the girl in question will be tied to some other person with the «heavenly» bonds...

[581] Beauty does not count, the financial situation alone is of any importance. If the girl is ugly, which is fairly rare amongst the good looking Matyós, there is the standing formula of consolation: — «Look at her my son, she has a great patch on her skirt!» — The great patch means a great strip of land...

When the boy has been persuaded and has given in, a woman is sent to the girl's family as an emissary to take soundings... If the thing is all right, the boy presents himself in the evening. — «Well, did you think of something?» — he asks the girl in the courtyard. — «My mother knows all about it», — is her answer. — «Well, godmother, will you let your daughter marry me?» — is [576] the question he asks the mother: as Matyó lads call every woman «godmother», whether they know her or not, unless she is a relation or a neighbour.

[592] The girl gives her young man an «engagement apron». Its colour is black and its bottom is embroidered with glorious bright embroidery: it is a masterpiece of Hungarian art! Otherwise it is forbidden to show affection either then, or during the whole time of marriage: in Matyó eyes that is a great disgrace even in the fortunate case where the young people actually happen to be in love with each other. The betrothed also gets a shirt, another masterpiece of the Matyó art of embroidering; done with red and blue threads. On an agreed date the young man is dressed in his engagement shirt and apron. About mid-

585 bours. One must know that the Matyó stable, as they call
[29] it the «sty», is the meeting place and living room of the men. There is even a fireplace in it. It is as it were a club house of primitive people. They collect there to talk, to smoke, to fry bacon. If the new wife is in love with her husband, she soon opens the door to him when he slinks home about midnight... But sometimes he may have to wait for a whole month. And they have to be extremely careful, lest the old people should notice something. This is taken very seriously, and next morning the young couple, and especially the new husband have something to listen
[76] to... To give some sign of love before others is a grave disgrace. Sooner or later however some event will occur, and presumably the old people also know that a baby is not brought by the stork, nor does it grow on a rose-bush, as the ladies-in-waiting of the Whitsun queen say in their songs... But all this is in vain, laws are laws, and the Matyó laws are particularly strict. This strictness is the cause of all those possible «disgraces» which may befall the young couple, during the wedding celebrations, if they do not take utmost care.

Wedding customs

(A little history is mingled with this chapter)

585 The most frequent word used in connection with a
574 Hungarian wedding is the word «lakodalom» meaning banquet, that is feasting, carousing; the marriage is celebrated, the wedding takes place, but the «lakodalom» is eaten and enjoyed! The Hungarian saying: «a 'lakodalom' in the hills and in the valleys» means an entertainment which is gay, well fed and endless. Food, drink,